

**--ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

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AA A variable-rate encoding system where the bit rate of the voice part is also lowered. The voice part is constituted of a vowel sound and a consonant sound. When the vowel sound of the voice part is encoded, the average bit rate when the voice part is sounded is lowered by reducing the number of encoding bits of a fixed codebook and by lowering the bit rate to half the rate. To discriminate a vowel sound, the relation between the LPC spectrum and LSP coefficients is used. The vowel sound has high peaks in the LPC spectrum, and the LSP coefficients are present on both sides of the peaks. When adjacent LSP coefficients are closer to each other than a predetermined threshold, it is judged that a peak is present. Judgment is made for some peaks, thereby judging whether or not the sound is a vowel.--

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